

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**SITE FILE COPY**

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ripley County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Circle

CITY, TOWN

Doniphan

VICINITY OF  
CODENOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
#10 - Rep. Bill Burlison

STATE

Missouri 63935

CODE 29

COUNTY

Ripley

CODE

181

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC  
☐ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ COMMERCIAL  
☐ EDUCATIONAL  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT  
☒ GOVERNMENT  
☐ INDUSTRIAL  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSEUM  
☐ PARK  
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Ripley County

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Ripley County Courthouse, Courthouse Circle

CITY, TOWN

Doniphan

VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 63935

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Circuit Clerk and Recorder, Ripley County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Circle

CITY, TOWN

Doniphan

STATE

Missouri 63935

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1971-1975

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN

P. O. Box 176

STATE

Jefferson City, Missouri 6510

# DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

\_\_EXCELLENT  
\_\_GOOD  
\_\_FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED.  
\_\_RUINS  
\_\_UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

\_\_UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
\_\_MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

### EXTERIOR

The Ripley County Courthouse is central to the downtown business section and the hub of traffic through Doniphan, Missouri. It is a two-story (plus high basement and attic) brick structure with stone foundation located on approximately 1-1/4 acres of ground. The architecture is a variant of the Second Empire style. The east entrance overlooks the central business section; the west entrance faces a main artery leading to Highway 160 and the bridge over the Current River; the south faces shops and business lining the downtown environs; and the north looks onto one of the town's principal arteries.

The major architectural feature originally was a central east tower with mansard roof, dormer windows and a lantern. Each corner pavilion of the foursquare building had a mansard roof with dormer windows and cresting at the roof edges. These distinctive features were damaged in a tornado in 1929. They were repaired, but never restored and so the building lost much of its original character.

Entrances are centered on the first story of each facade. The first story windows have segmental arches. Second story windows have round arches.

The four entrance porches have been modified, their broad stairways replaced with narrower concrete stairs and the wooden balustrades replaced with native rock balustrades (in a Work Projects Administration [WPA] project during the 1930's).

The roof is of composition shingle and is in a deteriorated state. The maintenance of the entire building has been neglected over a long period of years.

### INTERIOR

#### Basement

Walls in the basement are of a natural exposed stone. Public restrooms are located in the basement along with space which once housed the Commodity Food Offices and supplies. The floor is concrete.

#### First Floor

Two wide hallways, one running east-west and the other north-south, intersect each other in the center of the courthouse where the main stairway is located. Offices opening off the hallways include County Clerk, Collector, Assessor, Circuit Clerk, Recorder and Treasurer, and Probate and Magistrate Judge.

The walls of the corridors and offices are lath and plaster painted light green. Woodwork is oak which has been painted.

Vaults are located in four offices at the southwest, northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the building.

(Continued)

# SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	1899	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	William F. Schrage, architect John M. Anderson, builder
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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ripley County Courthouse is historically important because it is the traditional location of county government and community events. It has served as the location for jurisprudence in Ripley County for the past 76 years, and the site has been identified with county government since 1862 when an earlier courthouse was built on the same site

The courthouse is the most monumental example of architecture in Ripley County and one of only several historic structures in this relatively isolated, sparsely populated southern Missouri county.

The courthouse site was part of a 21 acre tract of land deeded to the county by George Lee and his wife for the development of a county seat. The site was designated as a public square in this original deed, and a wooden courthouse was authorized for construction at a cost of \$6,000 on July 16, 1860. Lemuel Kittrell, one of Doniphan's first permanent settlers, was construction superintendent, and completion was scheduled for April, 1862.<sup>1</sup>

This building was burned by Union soldiers late in the Civil War. County records were hidden in a cave (probably Wells Creek Cave north of Doniphan) and remained there until 1867 when they were recovered by G. V. Hutcherson, county clerk.

The court officials met in homes and business houses until a \$10,000 bond issue to finance a brick courthouse was passed in 1871. This building burned January 1, 1898.

The present building was completed in May, 1899, at a cost of \$19,505.<sup>2</sup> William F. Schrage was architect and John M. Anderson, Emporia, Kansas, was the low bidder for the construction contract.<sup>3</sup>

Marion L. Hudson established the brickyard and made the bricks for the building. His daughter, Jessie Hudson Kincheloe, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, remembers that her father found the clay and sand in the area most satisfactory for brick. He sent for Uncle John Cook, "a colored man who was very efficient, to be overseer of the two brickmaking kilns."<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Kincheloe remembers much activity and excitement connected with the building. Lumber was largely furnished by the mills of the county. As the courthouse housed the only auditorium in town, it was used for all community events attracting large audiences: high school commencements, concerts, school programs, lectures and Chautauqua productions.

(Continued)

## MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

1. Burford, Mrs. Dorothy W. et, interview by Margaret B. Shemwell, June, 1975.
2. Environmental Assessment, Ripley County, Courthouse Rehabilitation Project. Missouri A-95 project notification and review system pre-application notice, April 19, 1975.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1-1/2 Acres (Estimated)

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5
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6	9	4	3	2	5
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4	0	5	4	4	7	5
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ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C 

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--	--

--	--

B 

--	--

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

D 

--	--

--	--

--	--

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Margaret B. Shemwell, Secretary

June 29, 1975

ORGANIZATION

Ripley County Historical Society

DATE

314-996-2507 (2103 M&Tu)

STREET & NUMBER

503 Fourth Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Doniphan, Missouri 63935

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Department of Natural Resources,  
and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The wooden floors are worn through in some places showing light from the basement.

Second Floor

The second floor houses the Circuit Court Room with Judge's Chambers, Jury Room, Prosecuting Attorney's Offices and the Missouri Extension Service. The Juvenile Officer's office is also located on this floor.

The plastered walls are painted.

The courtroom is distinguished by an unusual mansarded ceiling. Plaster, window frames and flooring are in poor repair.

The Prosecuting Attorney's Office is not in use. Access to the attic is through the outer room in this office, and a recent inspection of this section revealed that pigeons had deposited at least a foot of dung, entirely covering the ceiling beams, demonstrating that the building in its present condition is a health hazard to those who work there.

PRESENT STATUS

Currently the county is applying for a \$240,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration (to match \$60,000 in local funds) in order to rehabilitate the courthouse to a safe condition. Although this urgently needed work is not a restoration project, it will preserve the building. The proposed project represents a direct turn-about in local attitude toward the building which has been the subject of a local preservation controversy since the early 1970's.

The architect, Jablonsky and Associates of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, characterizes the project as preserving the essential character of the exterior and the unusual features of the interior, and improving the workability of the interior for the county offices and court. The renovation includes exterior work replacing the roof, installing new aluminum windows (using old glass wherever possible), cleaning the exterior wall surfaces and tuckpointing. On the interior it includes removing pigeon dung from the attic, replacing damaged ceiling joists, installing new electrical wiring and central heating and cooling, painting the walls, installing new floor coverings and lowering the ceilings.

(Continued)

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**RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

**SITE**

The courthouse is located at the west end of Washington Street in the City of Doniphan. The grounds upon which the courthouse is located are approximately square with approximately 250 feet on each side. The ground slopes from east to west. The square is surrounded by a low, native stone wall constructed by the WPA, and by a sidewalk, outside the wall, on the north, east and south sides. A county jail, recently constructed and of utilitarian design, together with a parking lot occupy the west side of the square.

FOOTNOTE

1. Environmental Assessment, Ripley County, Courthouse Rehabilitation Project, Missouri 4-95 project notification and review system pre-application notice, April 19, 1975.

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RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Mrs. Kincheloe remembers that her mother trained young girls in tambourine drills and these groups performed on a platform built in the courtroom. Mrs. Kincheloe performed there with a musical tour booked by the Redpatch Lyceum Bureau of Chicago and later with her own company. Mrs. Dorothy Wright Burford is only one of the many residents now living in Doniphan who remember performing or being part of the audience in the courtroom auditorium.<sup>5</sup>

The building has been the scene of all County Judicial activities since its construction. Countless murder cases have been heard before the Bar of the Circuit Court, perhaps the most notable being the three men who pled guilty to the robbery of the Bank of Grandin and the murder of its president and most of his family in 1973.<sup>6</sup> The County has produced several Circuit Judges who presided there including J. C. Sheppard, Robert I. Cope, Charles L. Ferguson, and Howard R. Maness whose wife Macye Maness later served as Magistrate Judge.<sup>7</sup> Other local lawyers and public officials who made their start in public life in the Ripley County Courthouse include: James F. Fulbright who later served several terms as U. S. Congressman and later as Presiding Judge of the Missouri Court of Appeals, and John M. Atkinson who became the Speaker of the Missouri House of Representatives and was the Democratic Nominee for Governor in 1920.<sup>8</sup> From the Courthouse steps countless homes and farms were sold at auction when the great depression brought widespread foreclosure.<sup>9</sup>

The courthouse grounds are now used for numerous outdoor community activities: country musical programs, Labor Day Homecoming old-fashioned games and contests Kiwanis fish fries, checker games, horseshoe pitching and political speakings from the courthouse steps. Its location overlooking the downtown business community makes it a natural gathering place for most any cause or promotion--country fiddling to church rummage sales.

Preservation of the courthouse was recommended by several historians and preservationists including Gerhardt Kramer of St. Louis County, Missouri, well-known historical architect, who inspected the building and publicly acknowledged its poor condition and its local rarity as an historic public building.<sup>10</sup>

FOOTNOTES

1. Ripley County Court Records, Book C, pp. 189, 190, 227, 251, 252, 256, and 264.
2. Ripley County Court Records, Book J, pp. 243, 244, and 497.
3. Ibid., p. 256.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

4. Based on personal correspondence between Mrs. Margaret B. Shemwell of the Ripley County Historical Society, and Jessie Hudson Kincheloe, Colorado Springs, Colorado, April, 1971.
5. Statement by Mrs. Dorothy Wright Burford in interview with Mrs. Margaret B. Shemwell, June 1975.
6. Prospect-News [Doniphan, Missouri], Jan. 25, 1973-Feb. 15, 1973 and March 1, 1973.
7. Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1907-1908, pp. 74 (J. C. Sheppard); 1925-1926, p. 144 (Charles L. Ferguson); 1931-1932, p. 153 (Robert I. Cope); 1963-1964, p. 275 (Howard R. Maness); 1975-1976, p. 284 (Macye Maness).
8. Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1931-1932, p. 417 (Congressman); 1945-1946, p. 210, 215, 216 (Judge). 1907-1908, p. 117 (Speaker); 1921-1922, p. 490 (Governor).
9. Ripley County Deed Records, Book 97, p. 317.
10. Statement made during a meeting at Doniphan to discuss the future of the courthouse, June 13, 1972.



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RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

3. Kincheloe, Jessie Wright. Personal correspondence between Mrs. Kincheloe and Mrs. Margaret B. Shemwell, April, 1971.
4. Kramer, Gerhardt, statement made during a meeting at Doniphan to discuss the future of the courthouse, June 13, 1972.
5. Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1907-1908, 1921-1922, 1925-1926, 1931-1932, 1945-1946, 1963-1964, 1975-1976.
6. Prospect News [Doniphan, Missouri], Jan. 25, 1973-Feb. 15, 1973, March 1, 1973.
7. Ripley County Court Records, Books C and J.
8. Ripley County Deed Records. Book 97.

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. M. Patricia Holmes, editor  
Research Associate, Office of Historic Preservation  
Department of Natural Resources  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

October, 1975

Telephone: 314/751-4096

Form No. 10-301  
(Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ripley County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN

Doniphan

\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Ripley

STATE

Missouri

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE

U.S.G.S. Quadrangle "Doniphan, Mo."

SCALE

1:62500

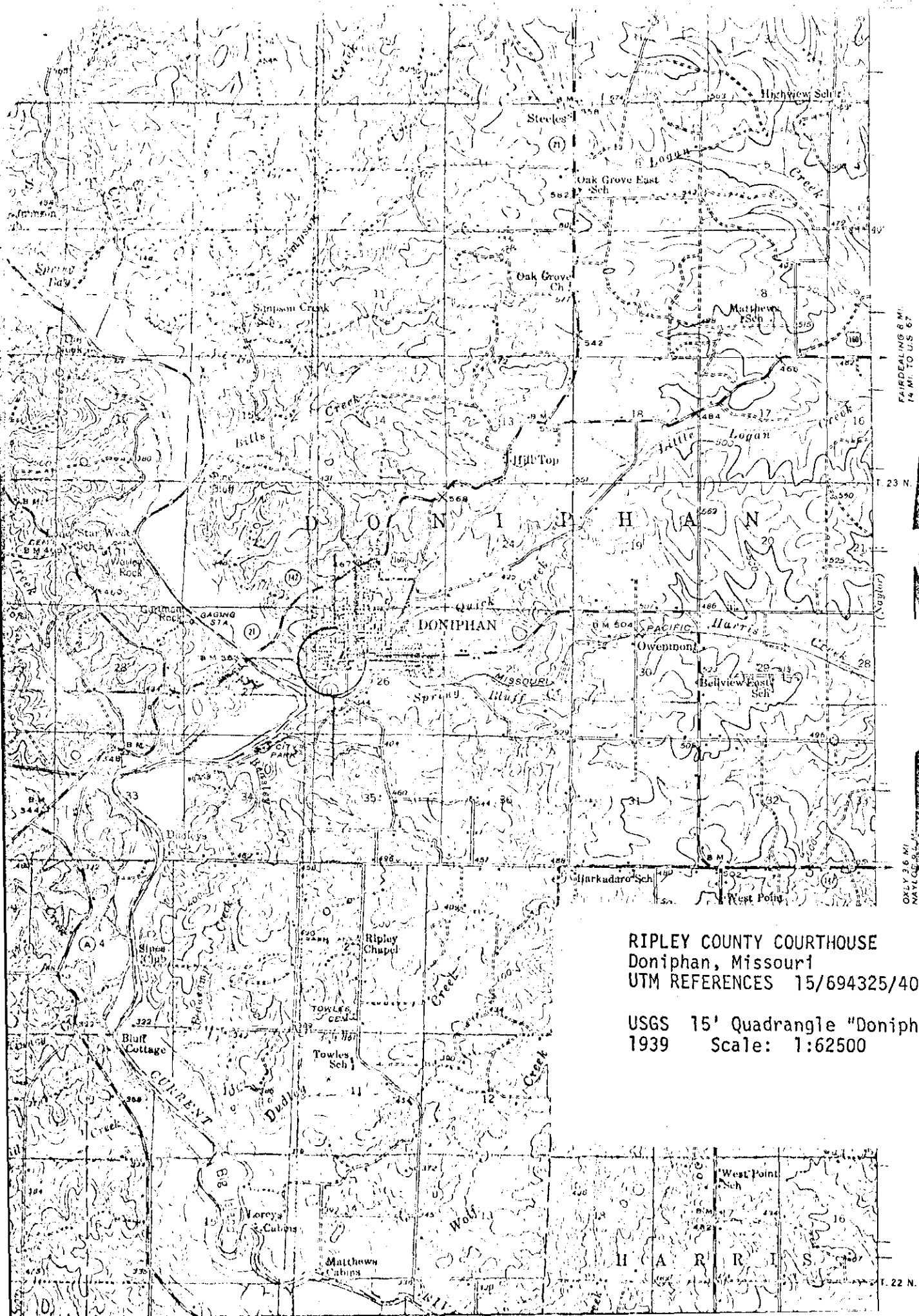
DATE

1939

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
 Doniphan, Missouri  
 UTM REFERENCES 15/694325/4054475

USGS 15' Quadrangle "Doniphan, Mo."  
 1939 Scale: 1:62500

## RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

COUNTY:	Ripley
LOCATION:	Courthouse Circle, Doniphan, Missouri 63935
OWNER: ADDRESS:	Ripley County, Ripley County Courthouse Courthouse Circle, Doniphan, Mo. 63935
DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:	03-05-76
DATE SENT TO JEFF. CITY:	04-30-76
DATE SENT TO D.C.:	05-06-76
DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:	05-10-76
DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:	11-07-76
DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE (AND PRESENTOR):	
DATE FILE REVIEWED:	

The Ripley County Courthouse is historically important because it is the traditional location of county government and community events. It has served as the location for jurisprudence in Ripley County for the past 76 years, and the site has been identified with county government since 1862 when an earlier courthouse was built on the same site.

Name of Site: Ripley Co. Courthouse  
Site Number: 1899  
Photographer: M. P. Holmes  
Date of Photo: Feb 9, 1971  
View of Photo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Neg. Size: \_\_\_\_\_

Ripley Co. Mo.  
1899

Name of Site:

Ripley Co. Churchman

Site Number

Photographer

Date of

View of

Neg. Size

Horripham, Mo.  
1899

M. P. Holmes

Feb 9, 1971

RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

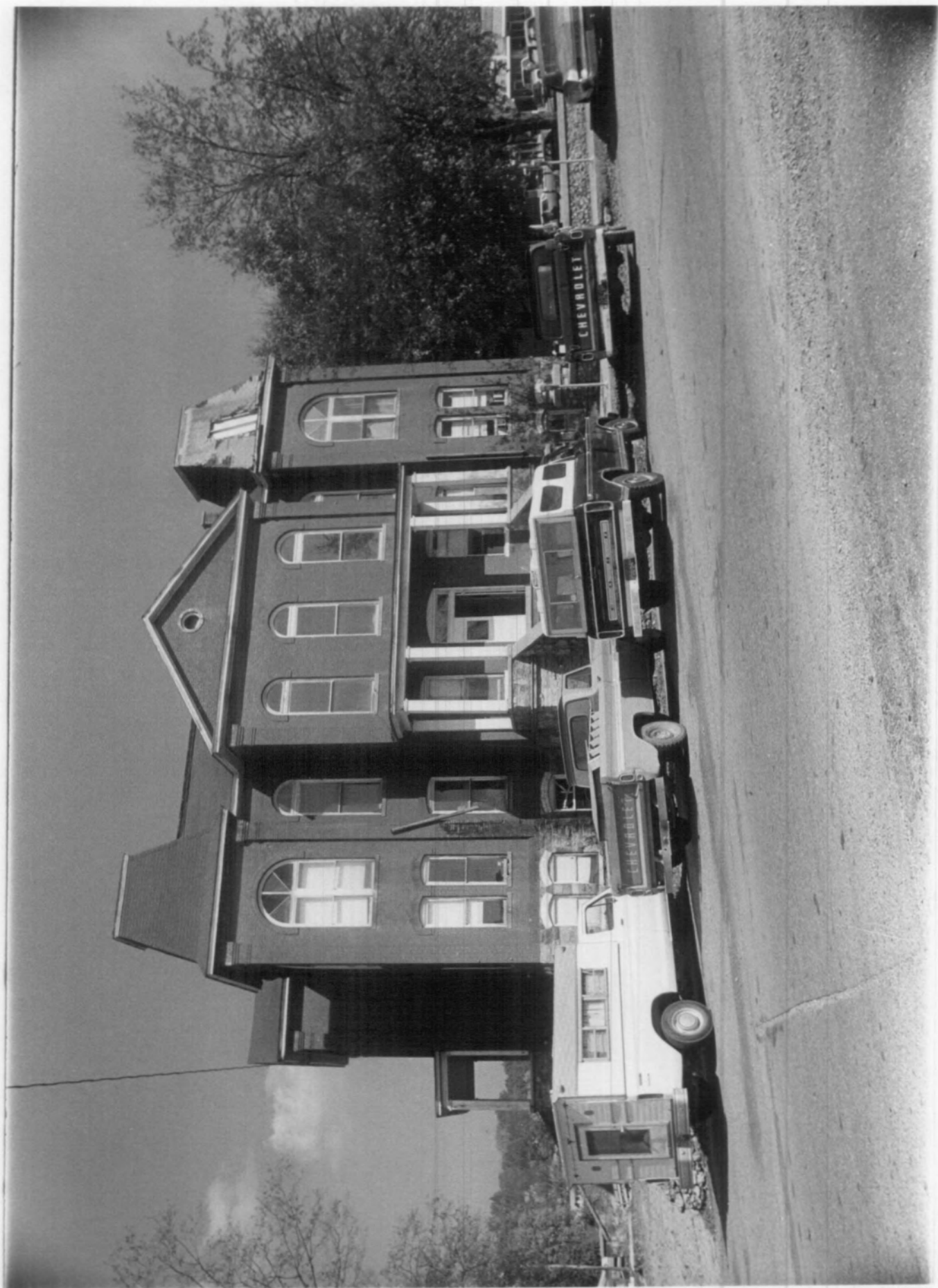




Ripley Co. Ohio  
Doniphan Mo

Bill Royce Oct 75-

SW 7 NE

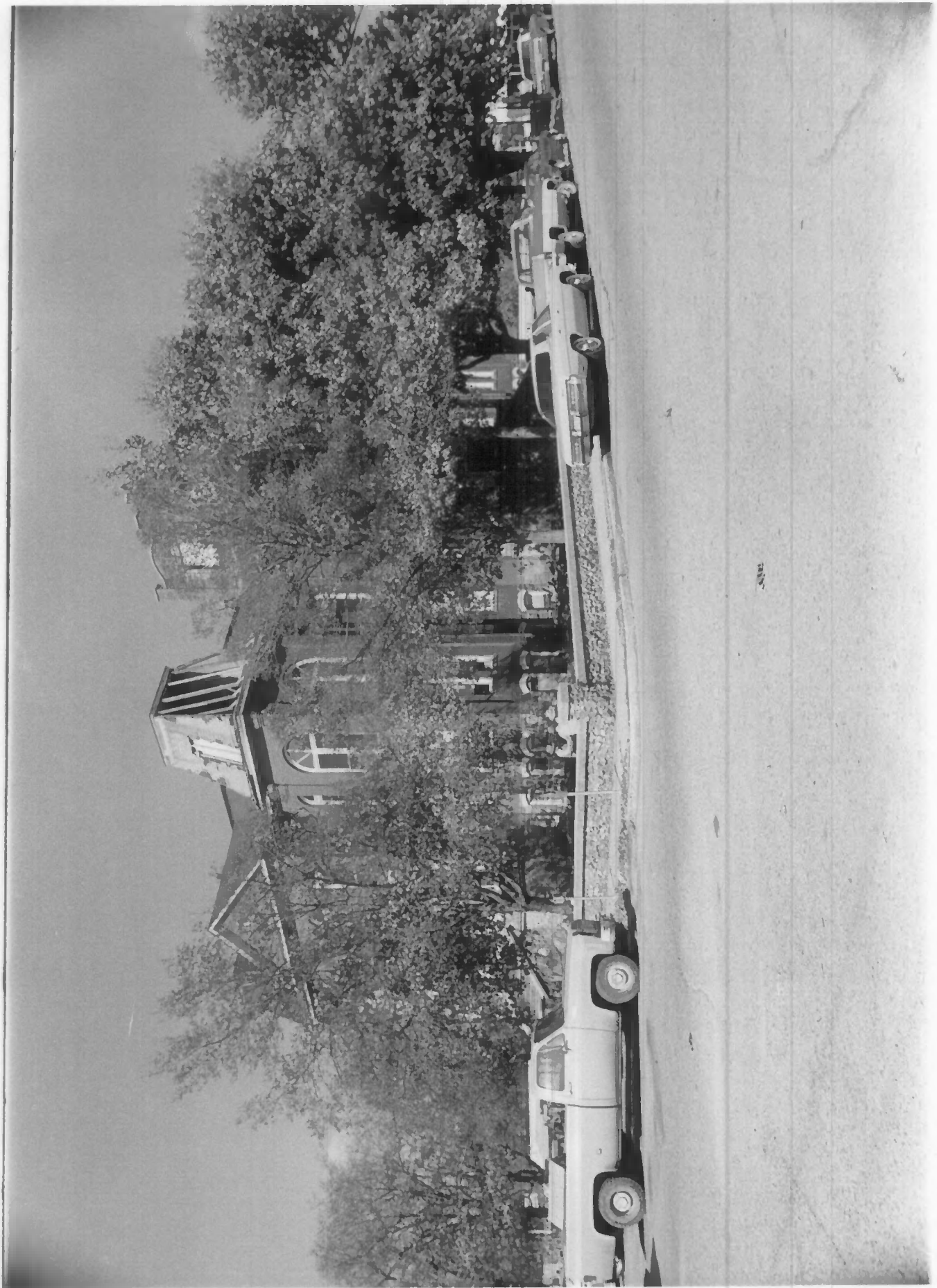


Ripley Co. Ohio

Don Johnson

Bill Royce Oct 75

SE  $\rightarrow$  NW



Ripley Co. Chase  
William Interview  
Bill Royce, Oct 75



